

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5933
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS,JO, PFOR
SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE HUSSEIN VISIT

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 2926 AND (B) TEL AVIV 2953

1. BLITZER REPORTED APRIL 29 FOR THE JERUSALEM POST AND AL HAMISHMAR THAT THE AMERICANS WERE QUITE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH KING HUSSEIN'S READINESS TO ACCEPT "THE OBLIGATIONS OF PEACE," AND QUOTED AMERICAN OFFICIALS AS SAYING THAT THE KING WOULD BE PREPARED TO COME "VERY CLOSE" TO ACCEPTING THE ISRAELI AND AMERICAN DEFINITIONS OF PEACE - 1 WHICH MEANS THE FULL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS, OPEN BORDERS, TRADE AND THE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS. "KING HUSSEIN APPEARS TO BE REASSURED OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR JORDAN AFTER HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, BLITZER REPORTED.

2. HAARETZ'S MARGALIT WROTE THAT WASHINGTON HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT WHEN THE KING SPEAKS OF THE
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PALESTINAINS, HE MEANS THE RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK AND NOT THE PLO. IN A SEPARATE COMMENTARY ENTITLED "CONTRADICTIONS IN WASHINGTON," MARGALIT SAID THAT WHILE THE WHITE HOUSE KNOWS ITS OBJECTIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST (THE BROOKINGS PLAN), IT IS DISCOVERING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULTIES IN TRYING TO GET THERE. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS DISCERNED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

THE CLAIMS OF SADAT AND HUSSEIN WHICH ARE "A SOURCE OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND CONCERN." THE AMERICANS ARE ALSO WONDERING WHAT POINT THERE IS IN FORCING THE SOVIETS OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST WHEN IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY MIGHT "MELLOW" THE PALESTINIANS. CITING ISRAELI AND AMERICAN SOURCES, MARGALIT SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS TO MEET FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON AFTER TALKS WITH ASSAD TO TRANSMIT THE ESSENCE OF ARAB VIEWS "SO THAT WHEN VANCE COMES TO THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS, HE WILL BE ABLE TO HEAR ISRAELI REACTIONS AND NOT HAVE TO REPORT TO PERES WHAT THE ARABS TOLD THE AMERICANS."

3. A "DOVISH" MEMBER OF HAARETZ'S EDITORIAL BOARD (POLES) SUMMED UP THE WEEKS' FLUCTUATION OF ISRAELI EMOTIONS (RELFIEF, THEN DISMAY) OVER THE ISSUE OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A GENEVA CONVENTION. ISRAEL REALIZES THE VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION IN WHICH IT WILL FIND ITSELF AT GENEVA WITH AT LEAST THREE ARAB DELEGATIONS PRESENT, THOSE OF EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA, AND PERHAPS THOSE OF LEBANON AND THE PLO AS WELL, NOT TO MENTION TWO SUPERPOWERS AS CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMEN AND THE HEADS OF VARIOUS COMMITTEES WHOM THEY MAY DESIGNATE. ISRAEL'S POLICY MAKERS, IF THEY UNDERSTOOD THIS, WOULD NOT REJECT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INTERIM SETTLEMENT WITH JORDAN, NOR COUNT ON A SPLIT BETWEEN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS, NOR WAIT TO SEE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS COME VERY CLOSE TO ISRAEL ON THE NATURE OF PEACE AND

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PRESIDENT SADAT ALSO SEEMS READY TO SOFTEN HIS STAND, NO LONGER CLAIMING THAT PEACE IS A MATTER FOR THE NEXT GENERATION BUT SPEAKING OF NORMALIZATION WITHIN FIVE YEARS. PERHAPS SADAT MIGHT EVEN LOOSEN UP MORE. ONE ISRAELI BELIEF THAT IS RAPIDLY DISSIPATING IS THAT SIMPLY RAISING THE QUESTION OF THE MEANING OF PEACE WILL CAUSE THE ARABS TO BACK AWAY FROM DISCUSSIONS. PRIME MINISTER RABIN COULD HAVE OPTED FOR AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO (BY CONSENTING TO WITHDRAW FROM JERICHO AND THE JORDAN VALLEY) AND COULD HAVE THUS PREVENTED THE PLO FROM ASSUMING A POSITION OF POLITICAL IMPORTANCE. NOW, WHETHER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TAKES PLACE OR NOT, ISRAEL MUST PREPARE FOR DISCUSSIONS ON HER EASTERN FRONTIER "IN WHATEVER MANNER THE U.S. DEEMS PREFERABLE."

4. THE EDITORIALISTS GENERALLY WELCOME WHAT THEY TAKE TO BE PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEWLY-FOUND CAUTION OVER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. DAVAR WROTE THAT IN HIS MEETINGS

WITH THE SYRIANS AN THE SAUDI ARABIANS THE PRESIDENT
WILL HAVE YET FURTHER CHANCES TO SEE THE BROAD ABYSS
BETWEEN THE ISRAELI CONCEPT OF PEACE AND THAT F MOST
ARAB LEADERS. HOWEVER, EVEN IF SOONER OR LATER
WASHINGTON SHOULD RETURN TO AN AMENDED MODEL OF THE
INTERIM SETTLEMENT POLICY, DAVAR WROTE, ISRAEL CAN EXPECT
DIFFICULT POLITICAL TESTS IN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO.

5. HAARETZ NOTED THAT KING HUSSEIN, WHO HAS BEEN WORRYING
ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT
GENEVA AND WHO OBVIOUSLY HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE 1974
RABAT RESOLUTIONS, MAY HAVE PROVEN TO BE AN ALLY FOR
ISRAEL IN HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. U.S. POLICY
MAY BECOME CLEARER AFTER THE CARTER-ASSAD AND VANCE-
GROMYKO MEETINGS, BUT EVEN IF STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS
RETURN TO FAVOR, ISRAEL WILL NOT BE ABLE TO AVOID FACING
UP TO ITS EASTERN BORDER PROBLEM, SAID HAARETZ.
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